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Ministry of Advanced Education

PROVINCE FUNDS REGIONAL LITERACY CO-ORDINATORS

VICTORIA – The Province will provide more than $1.6 million to fund regional literacy co-ordinators at 16 public post-secondary institutions to enhance co-ordination and delivery of adult literacy programs, Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell announced today.

"There are a wide range of services and programs to improve literacy from childhood through to adulthood, but regions are often faced with challenges matching up people with the programs and services they need and making all the various literacy programs work together efficiently," Coell said. "In his recently released report on the progress of the government's literacy plan, the auditor general noted that progress is being made, and recommended government work with all of its education partners to build a seamless adult education system."

Currently, part-time RLCs co-ordinate and support the Community Adult Literacy Program. CALP, funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education, allows community-based organizations to partner with public post-secondary institutions to deliver literacy programming at the community level. RLCs also provide professional development, build partnerships to create capacity for literacy delivery, support literacy programs, and develop public awareness about literacy.

The new and expanded positions will enhance the degree of co-ordination within each region and support curriculum development, learner assessment and performance monitoring. The RLCs will help to lay the foundation for implementation of workplace literacy and essential skills initiatives. They will foster public awareness and promote increased participation of learners, service providers, business and industry in helping British Columbians improve their literacy levels.

"Colleges play an important role linking the world of work with the world of learning," said Cindy Oliver, president of the Federation of Post Secondary Educators of B.C. "Their connections with school districts, communities and workplaces make them the logical place to co-ordinate adult literacy initiatives."

The Ministry of Advanced Education has been given responsibility for leadership in promoting literacy and essential skill initiatives in the workplace. Essential skills provide the foundation for learning all other skills and enable people to evolve with their jobs and adapt to workplace change. They include: reading text, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, thinking skills, computer use and continuous learning.

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Since 2001, the government has invested over $130 million in literacy for British Columbians through the Province's literacy strategy, ReadNow BC. These programs have delivered approximately $32 million in literacy funding for schools, teachers, parents and others; $25 million for new textbooks; $30 million for early learning; $25 million for adult literacy; and $15 million for libraries.

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Media contact: Linda O'Connor
Communications Manager
Ministry of Advanced Education
250 952-6400

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